BREAKING NEWS:
State fugitive nabbed, large cache of illegal drugs found inside House of Israel building.

Fri, May 16 2008
-- By Kelly Young
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A squad of Jacksonville Police Department officers, in full SWAT regalia, executed a search warrant Thursday evening at the local House of Israel building, resulting in the arrest of one state fugitive and the seizure of a large stash of illegal drugs. David Baugh was taken into custody on a parole absconder warrant filed by the Missouri Department of Corrections' parole board.

"Detective Jason Price received information Thursday from Missouri that David Baugh, who we knew through previous dealings with the House of Israel, was wanted for violating parole and was considered armed and dangerous," said Police Chief Reece Daniel. "Once they sent us the warrant and we checked it, I gathered up a group of officers and we went over there, surrounded the building and knocked on the door." No one answered the door, but Baugh's vehicle was observed on the property and several officers claim they witnessed Baugh looking out through the building's back window.

"While we were at the scene, Detective Travis Cearley put together a search warrant and had it reviewed and signed by Judge (Craig) Fletcher, giving us the authority to go in and search for this individual -- even if we had to use forcible means in order to get into the building," Daniel said. After securing the search warrant, JPD knocked once more on each of the building's doors before breaking down the front door and entering the premises. The property was entered at approximately 5:30 p.m., Thursday. Daniel said Baugh was found in one of the building's back rooms.

"We finally found David Baugh laying in his bed, fully dressed including his boots, claiming that he had been asleep and hadn't heard us knocking. We arrested him and brought him out of the building," he said. "While looking for the suspect, officers observed a large amount of drugs, in plain view, inside the building."

Authorities confiscated a large amount of illegal drugs, Thursday evening, found inside the building occupied by the House of Israel. The drugs were found while JPD was looking for David Baugh, a fugitive wanted by the state of Missouri for violating his parole.

The police are not disclosing the type of drugs found. According to Daniel, a good portion of the illegal drugs were packaged in small bags that were labeled with the "House of Israel" and the "Republic of Texas" on the outside of the bags. "In dealing with them previously, the House of Israel has always disavowed any connection with the Republic of Texas. Well now we have very valid and obvious proof that they are at least espousing a connection with that group," Daniel said. "We also found Robert Fox inside the building, who is the purported caretaker of the property, and questioned him about the controlled substances." JPD is still investigating the incident, and anticipates that charges will be filed against other members of the House of Israel in connection to the confiscated drugs. Due to the packaging the drugs were found in, JPD investigators believe it was intended for distribution and sale.

Baugh was transferred Friday morning from the Jacksonville Jail to the Cherokee County Jail where he will await transport back to Missouri. "He violated his parole by leaving the state of Missouri, and parole violators are the same as an escaped prisoner as far as the law is concerned. Once we got confirmation that there was a warrant out for his arrest, we went straight after him," Daniel said. "You don't want someone running around town that has been termed armed and dangerous by a parole board."

Baugh and another man, Stephen Jackson, were arrested back in early April for failing to identify themselves to officers. While Jackson was in custody, JPD learned that he was wanted by the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms on weapons charges. "This is the second felony fugitive that we have gotten out of this bunch here recently, and that trend worries me. As a permeation of the Republic of Texas -- one that is cloaked in religion in order to give them extra protection against the law -- they follow an anti-government, anti-law dogma," Daniel said.

Since his initial arrest, Baugh has repeatedly sent paperwork to the City of Jacksonville, the police department, the district attorney's office, the Jacksonville Daily Progress and KETK-56 detailing his innocence and threatening legal action against the city. "In my opinion this group is very dangerous; they are not harmless and they are not to be taken lightly. It's the same sort of thing Timothy McVeigh believed in. People may have thought he was harmless too until he blew up that building in Oklahoma with all those children in it," Daniel said. "They have no respect for the law, and they are going to be taken very seriously by the department. We want to stop this before it gets started."

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